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Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict

Statement by the Chairman addressed to the non-State armed groups in Myanmar

At the 16th meeting of the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict, held on 25 July 2008 in connection with the consideration of the report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in Myanmar (S/2007/666), the Chairman made the following statement on behalf of the Working Group:

The Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict

1. *Calls the attention* of the leaders of the United Wa State Army, the Karen National Union/Karen National Liberation Army (KNU-KNLA), the Karenni National Progressive Party, the Kachin Independence Organization, the Karenni National People's Liberation Front, the Democratic Karen Buddhist Army, the Shan State Army-South, the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army and the KNU-KNLA Peace Council to the fact that on 6 December 2007 the Working Group considered the report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in Myanmar (S/2007/666), in which their names are mentioned;

2. *Recalls* the strong condemnation by the Security Council of the recruitment and use of child soldiers and other violations and abuses committed against children in armed conflict, in accordance with its resolution 1612 (2005);

3. *Strongly reaffirms* that the release of children cannot be made dependent on the conclusion of a peace agreement;

4. *Urges* those leaders:

(a) To put an immediate end to the continuing recruitment and use of child soldiers, including by adopting and implementing concrete and timebound action plans, to intensify measures to ensure the protection of children in armed conflict and to cooperate, in accordance with Security Council resolution 1612 (2005), with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict;

(b) To allow and facilitate unhindered access to the United Nations country task force on monitoring and reporting;

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(c) To take immediate steps to release those children associated with their forces and facilitate their follow-up by the United Nations Children's Fund, with a view to their effective reintegration;

(d) To that end, to immediately enter into dialogue with the United Nations country task force on monitoring and reporting established pursuant to Security Council resolution 1612 (2005) to devise time-bound action plans;

5. *Strongly urges* the leaders to respond positively to the present message, bearing in mind the importance that perpetrators of violations and abuses committed against children in situations of armed conflict be held accountable.